



Are you a Carer?

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Many people looking after someone do not recognise themselves as Carers.

You are a Carer if you provide, or intend to provide, practical and / or emotional support to a relative, friend or neighbour who is disabled, ill or frail. Their disability could be a physical disability, a hearing or sight loss, learning difficulty or mental health problem, or they could be frail due to old age.

Or you may be the parent of a child with a disability or illness. You may be a child or young person who spends a lot of time helping someone who is disabled or ill, for example, one of



your parents or a brother or sister.

You might have been caring for some time or started caring more recently. Either way it is likely that you are caring out of love, friendship or duty.

Caring will not always be easy emotionally or physically. Caring can have a major effect on your emotions, time, relationships and everyday life, and you have needs of your own that shouldn't take second place to your caring responsibilities.

Services are available to help and support you, as well as the person you are caring for to cope with any distress you may be experiencing and to help with any practical problems that you might incur.



How can we help?

We are an independent, well-established charity with over 4,000 Carers currently registered with us. We provide information, advice and support to Carers across Southwark

Southwark Carers provides information, advice and support to Carers across the borough. We also aim to raise awareness of the rights and needs of Carers in Southwark.

We work in partnership with other local organisations to make sure that Carers get as much support as possible.

Southwark Carers offer a wide range of free services for the Carers registered with us. Members of Southwark Carers can receive:



Advice - Confidential one-to-one advice, by telephone, e-mail or in person.

Advocacy - Help with voicing complaints and issues to various authorities.

Information - Provision of an information pack and bi-monthly newsletters.

Counselling - Free counselling service giving you the chance to talk to someone about your situation in a confidential setting.

Carers Groups - Support and social groups operated by Southwark Carers.



Health Liaison Project - Working with GPs' surgeries and hospitals throughout the borough helping primary care staff identify and support Carers.

Grant Schemes - A range of breaks schemes to assist you in your caring role.

Southwark EnergyCare - A trained advisor can help you reduce the costs of heating your home, if over 30% of your total income is spent on your fuel bills we can provide a financial grant to support you.

Flexi-respite care - we can provide up to 40 hours of respite care to families.

Support and representation - whatever problems you face as a Carer, we aim to provide support. We campaign for change on behalf of the borough's Carers and make sure that your voice is heard.

Other activities - A number of activities and groups are run at our Carers Centre, including massage, relaxation and positive thinking and arts and crafts. We also arrange regular social outings for groups of Carers, such as day trips to the seaside.



Practical help and support for a wide range of care-related issues



Advocacy Service

Support in dealing with social, health or housing problems that Carers might face when accessing services for themselves or the person they care for.

Why is advocacy necessary?

People with disabilities, older people and their Carers have the same civil and political rights as any other person. They have the right:

- To a decent standard of living
- To equal opportunities in all situations
- To the accommodation services, support services, training programmes and medical treatment that they need
- To participate in community life
- To protection against abuse, exploitation and discrimination
- To have control over decisions about their life
- To have an advocate, friend or lawyer represent them if necessary
- To get information about their rights.

We help make sure these rights are adhered to by providing information and education to individuals and organisations.

When people can't exercise their choices, their rights and

responsibilities on their own for some reason, we can represent their interests and their decisions – in the way they decide.

If you have a complaint

Our Advocacy Service can advise you if you have a complaint about:

- services
- care and treatment
- the way decisions are being made about you.

Advocacy can help you:

- to talk about your complaint with the people involved, or if this doesn't work
- to present your case to the appropriate complaints agency.

We can come and visit you, or if you prefer, you can make an appointment and come and see us at the Carers Centre.

Advice and Support Services

The Advice and Support Service aims to give Carers, extra assistance to deal with the complexity of statutory services.

The Advice and Support service offer support on all types of Carers' problems.

These include coping with all sorts of illnesses, claiming benefits, housing problems accessing health and social care services, the effect of caring on a family, and respite or employment issues.

When you contact the service, a member of staff will listen to you carefully, and encourage you to talk about your concerns.

Sometimes just telling someone about your difficulties can be a relief and is an important first step towards dealing with your worries.

They will be able to suggest ways of dealing with the issue and help you to take practical steps to do so.

They will also be able to provide you with information on help and support that is available both from Southwark Carers and other organisations.





You can contact the Advice and Support team as often as you need to. On each occasion, you can take as much (or as little) time as you want to discuss your concerns.

Some Carers only contact us once and are able to get the support they require. Others may wish to arrange a follow-up call or to visit the Carers Centre for an appointment.

We understand that further complications, or new issues, can arise in the future and we welcome ongoing contact with carers who need it.

If, for any reason, we cannot help you with the difficulties, we will be able to signpost you to other services who can.

Here are a few examples of the type of issues that the Advice & Support team can assist with:

- Welfare benefits, including Carers Allowance, Disability Living

Allowance and Attendance Allowance

- Housing problems
- How to get the most from health and social services for the person you care for and for yourself
- Dealing with the impact of caring on you and your family, including access to respite care and the various other support services for Carers locally and nationally
- Employment problems, including information on your rights.
- Energy advice and support through the Southwark EnergyCare project, run by Southwark Carers. Carers can get advice on overdue bills, social tariffs, heating and insulation and grants for energy improvements.

The service is free and confidential to those who care for someone who lives in Southwark.

We do not provide legal advice but if you need it then we can refer you to another organisation that will be able to provide that for you.



Free and confidential advice for those caring for someone living in Southwark



Counselling

If you are feeling anxious, low, stressed, or struggling with your caring responsibilities, our counselling and therapies service may be able to help.

Being a Carer can be a challenging role. At times it can evoke distress, frustration and anger.

We all live through difficult and distressing events or experience painful feelings.

While caring for a loved one these problems together with stress, illness or bereavement or on their own can damage our relationships and make it difficult to cope.



We offer a range of psychological help and support, including CBT.



What a counsellor does

The counsellor's role is to help you gain a greater understanding and awareness of yourself and the problems you have to face.

A counsellor will not tell you what to do, but will encourage you to develop confidence in your own ability to help yourself.

Counselling involves meeting weekly to talk about sometimes difficult / personal issues to help us find better ways of dealing with them.

For this reason trust, confidentiality and a safe environment are all part of the service.

Our counselling service

Southwark Carers offers one-to-one counselling for adults living in the London Borough of Southwark.



At present counselling will usually be weekly for a period up to 13 weeks.

Counselling is provided in venues across the borough of Southwark including specialist Counselling and Health Centres.

Our counsellors are either in advance training or have already qualified and receive regular professional clinical supervision.

The Counselling Service works to the British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Counselling.

What you can expect from us

- Courtesy and confidentiality.
- No discriminatory attitude (because of race, gender,

disability or sexual orientation.)

- A safe, non-judgmental space for you to talk
- A professional & clinically supervised service.

Counselling is usually provided in English. Other languages are available if spoken by a counsellor.

It might take time to allocate the right counsellor to you depending on availability and the time of year.

We offer counselling during days and evenings, subject to availability.



Gain a greater understanding and awareness of yourself and the problems you face.



Support and Activity Groups

Caring for a relative or partner can leave people isolated, we run a series of groups and events to try and help carers relax together, learn together and have fun.

Carers' Support Groups are a great way to meet other people who may have similar experiences to you and can provide emotional support as well as the opportunity to share helpful information. We run, or are involved with groups throughout the borough.

We aim to provide as many opportunities as we can for Carers to take a break from caring, relax together, learn together and have fun at the same time.

Our groups feature regular speakers from a range of healthcare professions who provide advice on different aspects of care. Each group also has a regular free massage service to help you unwind.

We have support groups in:

- Nunhead
- Camberwell Green
- Rotherhithe
- Walworth
- Peckham
- Herne Hill
- East Dulwich
- Bermondsey

Carers Activity Group

Regular meetings to get together, invited speakers and to plan activities and outings.

Former Carers Group

Come along and meet old friends and make some new ones.

Healthy Carers Group

The chance to hear from expert speakers who can provide advice on ways to improve your health, wellbeing and lifestyle.

Arts & Crafts Group

A chance to learn and explore your artistic side and take some time out from caring.

Film Club

A great way to relax and enjoy a few hours of escapism.



If you have an idea for a support group, event or activity, please let us know



Financial assistance and grants

Many carers are living in poverty and financial hardship - we provide a series of financial grants that can help carers take a break, cover transport costs or pay their bills.

Fix-Yourself-a-Break (FYAB)

The FYAB scheme, run by Southwark Carers, helps people take a break from caring by providing financial assistance to Carers who meet its eligibility criteria.

The payment (up to £250 depending on circumstances) can be used for any expenses relating to going on holiday or taking a respite break. The money can be spent on transport or accommodation, or it can be used for a number of short breaks, social outings or recreational activities.

The breaks are chosen and organised by the Carer and can be in the UK or abroad. Eligibility for the scheme is non-means tested, i.e. you may be able to receive assistance through the scheme regardless of your financial situation and income.

Fix-Yourself-a-Ride (FYAR)

The FYAR scheme provides up to £50 towards the cost of travel expenses.

You can claim up to £50 to spend on trains, tubes, cabs, oystercards or fuel costs.



Fuel Debt Grant

Through Southwark EnergyCare any Carer who looks after someone living in the Borough of Southwark can access one-off fuel debt grants.

These are for Carers who are currently in debt with their energy supplier or who are spending more than 10 percent of their income on their energy bills



Respite care

Depending on the type and intensity of care needed, your own health and well-being can be compromised by looking after someone else.

When you are taking care of somebody you also need to think about caring for yourself. In most jobs you get paid holidays - you should try to take some time off from caring too!

You can get some respite from your caring role in a number of different ways:

- Residential respite: The person you care for goes away to be looked after by someone else for a while – residential or nursing care or on a holiday.
- Domiciliary care: Someone comes into your home and takes over care for a while (a few hours or sometimes overnight) so you can go out or have some time to yourself.
- You can sometimes get a break when the person you care for is involved in other activities, for example at school or a Day Centre.

Southwark Carers work closely with a number of domiciliary care service providers, to provide respite cover for Carers.

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Once registered you will be able to claim up to 40 hours of free respite care.
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We provide emergency planning, this includes providing emergency respite and are participation in a boroughwide Message in a Bottle Scheme.

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Holidays

There are a number of organisations that provide opportunities for children with special needs or people with disabilities to go on holiday with appropriate support provided.

Some, such as Vitalise, provide special weeks for Carers to go with the person they care for.

A change of scene can be very therapeutic if there is appropriate

support available to help you to enjoy it.

Forresters is Rethink's respite hotel. They provide 24 hour mental health support in a hotel setting to give guests the best possible holiday to aid their recovery.

They also aim to provide their Carers with the peace of mind to have a complete break without worry.

For more information contact Rethink on 023 8084 3042.

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Providing Carers with the peace of mind to have a complete break
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Information Services

Carers need a wide range of information to support them in their caring.

Whether it's information about their rights as a Carer, or details on dealing with a medical condition that the person they care for has, or information on what services are available locally through to what organisations support Carers, we have it all at Southwark Carers.

Newsletter

We provide a Newsletter to all those registered with us every two months. The Newsletter contains updates about Southwark Carers services, news on what is happening locally and nationally that might affect Carers and in each issue we provide a special feature article on a topic that Carers have expressed an interest in.

Carers Forums

We host a Carers Forum once a quarter at Cambridge House in Camberwell. Each Forum offers the chance to hear speakers on a topic of interest to Carers and ask them questions. We also make sure that Carers get a chance to talk with each other to swap stories and information from their own experiences.

Carers Information Pack

Each Carer who registers with us receives a bumper pack of information through the post. This information pack contains useful material on a wide range of topics and lots of details on local and national contacts.

Website

We have a website that contains all the details of our Information Pack and the contents of our Newsletter, as well as talks from our Carers Forums, online Forms and our contact details as well as links to other useful organisations.

Awareness Campaigns

From time to time we distribute posters and leaflets to GP practices, leisure centres and other community buildings to raise awareness of Carers and the issues that are important to Carers.

If you'd like some of these to distribute to a group or organisation then contact the Information Service and they will arrange to send you some of our most up to date posters and leaflets.

Become a member of Southwark Carers

Southwark Carers is an organisation run by and for Carers. We also seek to increase recognition of Carers invaluable contribution and to influence policy to recognise the needs and contributions of Carers.

You DO NOT have to be a member to receive our services.

Southwark Carers is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. Carers and other individuals in Southwark interested in our work can become members of the company. Being a member of the company, unless you are under the age of 18, gives you the right to:

- Vote at any general meeting held by Southwark Carers
- Nominate members to stand for election to the Board of Trustees

- Be nominated to stand for election to the Board of Trustees

All members can help to shape our policies that should benefit Carers in Southwark. We wish to encourage as many people to join our organisation and support the needs of Carers in Southwark.

All members are obliged to abide by the rules set out in our governing document (Memorandum and Articles of Association). Under company law the names of members are maintained on a register kept at our offices unless this would place the member at risk. The register is regularly updated and can be inspected at our offices.

If you would like to join Southwark Carers please complete and return the tear off form and return it to us.

Application to become a member

Name Status: Current Carer
 Address Former Carer
 Other

 Post code
 Telephone
 Email

I agree to abide by the rules of Southwark Carers and wish to receive a summary of the rules (please tick)

Signature Date
 Print name

You will receive a membership card.

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Printed October 2010



www.southwarkcarers.org.uk info@southwarkcarers.org.uk
Registered Charity Number 1085300 Company Limited by Guarantee 4146495



The Princess Royal Trust
for Carers